



Title: Welcome Letter from the Editor

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Writing is a way of knowing, and those who write understand it is a difficult and messy business. – Ken Hyland

The journal issue in front of you marks the fourth issue of *NUGSE Research in Education*. The authors, peer reviewers, and editors who have worked to keep this project growing and thriving understand too well the difficulty and messiness of writing—and yet they persist.

This journal has received 56 manuscripts in the last two years, 15 of which have been accepted and published. Of the remaining 41, 3 were rejected either because they didn't fit within the journal's scope or they simply were not robust enough to be considered research articles. This leaves 38 articles which have received peer review feedback and editor decisions of Revise and Resubmit or Minor Revisions Needed, but whose authors have given up in the face of this "difficult and messy business" of writing research.

This picture gives me the distinct impression that the principal quality differentiating those authors who publish with us and those who don't is not expertise, skill, or language ability, but *persistence*.

There is clearly a budding culture of striving, in which developing researchers and practitioners in Kazakhstan want to go the extra mile and share their scholarly writing with a wider audience. This community now needs support and guidance. The work done thus far has built the vehicle to give emerging researchers of Kazakhstan the platform to publish their work, and more importantly to gain the skills and confidence to become producers and consumers of educational research. How can we now ensure that the vehicle has fuel and is maintained well into the future? How can we better support authors to persist through the peer review and revision process? How can we support a culture of striving? These are the questions that will become our cheerful work in the next year.

NUGSE Research in Education 2.2 is noteworthy for several reasons. For the first time within our pages, all three research articles involve fieldwork and data collection involving human subjects. Through their diligent and ethically-minded research, the first three articles bring the voices, experiences, and ideologies of Kazakhstani teachers and families into our academic discourse community.

In the Featured Article, Yuliya Khegay draws our attention to the experiences of teachers as they are not only affected by numerous reforms recently implemented in Kazakhstan, but they are affecting change and are themselves central agents of reform. The central finding in her work comes from interviews with ten teachers in the reform-intensive environment of Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools. This paper highlights the work to be done to create collaborative administrative cultures, but also the more hopeful message that hardworking and undervalued teachers are seeing the teaching related aspects of these reforms in a positive light.

Assem Amantay, Aigerim Myrzabayeva, and Akmaral Karabay investigate both the explicit and tacit ways that urban Kazakh families view and manage their family's use of the Kazakh language. They found through rather extensive interviews and home observations that family practices don't always match the frequently stated ideology that "Kazakhs should speak Kazakh." Their research helps us understand the important differences between what people say and what they do in practice, the multifaceted nature of family language policies in multilingual Kazakhstan, and the value of multiple data collection instruments to triangulate accurate findings.

Ruslan Kakenov takes on the task of better understanding teachers' experiences of using CLIL pedagogy to teach school subjects in Kazakh. This is a novel topic because CLIL has thus far been primarily investigated as a strategy associated with teaching content courses in English. His findings highlight several areas for improving the teaching of content courses in Kazakh, including the need to promote Kazakh language proficiency in both students and teachers, most notably through the development and dissemination of CLIL teaching materials and pedagogical strategies to teachers. The teachers interviewed also stressed that we should not underestimate the value of professional collaboration and networks where teachers can share experience and support each other.

This issue also presents the first *critical review* of previous research, a genre of research writing that sees each new published article as something be debated, argued, and negotiated. Serik Iyatov deconstructs and analyzes an article from our December 2016 issue, thereby revisiting the issue of teaching approaches in Kazakhstan, and adding a critical perspective to help move the discussion forward. This contribution can be taken as an example for future authors who may want to take on this highly interactive, debate-oriented writing.

Finally, this issue continues our tradition of presenting a handful of editorials on topics related to student learning experiences. The first editorial is actually two in one, as Andrey Chsherbakov demonstrates the challenge of arguing one issue from two sides. His competing essays on the Latinization of the Kazakh alphabet are presented side by side as an exercise in critical thought and the important task of scholars to hold contradictory perspectives in their mind at the same time. Svetlana Ogay, Mariya Ippolitova, Fariza Baidaly, Lenera Memetova, and Assel Temirbekova close out the issue with two editorials on the various program modes offered at NUGSE. The reader will come away with a better understanding of the student experience at NUGSE, as well as the challenges and advantages associated with studying in a traditional face-to-face setting, or through a low-residency blended learning model.

As with all the work that we do, we earnestly hope that these pages communicate meaningful ideas that are worth your time to read and consider, and that the persistence shown in these pages may also encourage you to join our efforts to build a community of scholars interested in educational research in Kazakhstan.

D. Philip Montgomery
Chief Editor